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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000309

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP, IO/UNP AND EAP/ANZ  
GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SANDERS  
NSC FOR VICTOR CHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NZ](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND AND THE UN: NEW PERMREP BANKS LOOKS  
AHEAD

Classified By: Charge David Burnett,  
For Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: New Zealand's new UN Permrep, Rosemary Banks, says that New Zealand will maintain its traditional opposition to permanent members' vetos in an expanded UN Security Council (UNSC). Foreign Minister Goff supports the idea of Japan becoming a permanent UNSC member, and also backs our view that the Human Rights Council must keep HR Violators from serving as Chair. Banks shares her government's view that intervention in global hotspots is best placed under the purview of the UN and not individual players. But unlike many, she is very aware that most Kiwis do not appreciate how their government's foreign policy is diminishing New Zealand's influence in the UN despite the country's emphasis on the importance of the organization. We predict Banks will be a very constructive player on UN reform. End Summary.

12. (C) On April 5, Charge and Pol-Econ Couns met with Rosemary Banks, currently Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to discuss her views on UN reform in light of her impending reassignment as NZ's UN Permrep. Banks was joined by Joan Mosley, Director of MFAT's United Nations, Human Rights, and Commonwealth Division. Banks confirmed that Foreign Minister Goff supports the idea that Japan should be a permanent UNSC member. He also shares our view that the Human Rights Council must be reformed so that rights violators can no longer serve as Council chair. Banks acknowledged that the United States had been right all along to oppose universalized Human Rights Council membership. New Zealand had believed that giving violators a voice in the Council would encourage them to improve their behavior. "Now we don't," Banks said. Somewhat significantly given her UN and human rights portfolios, Mosley added that some human rights resolutions are "whackers."

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UN: Big Brother or Big Bother?  
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13. (C) The Charge noted that unlike New Zealand, the United States resists the notion of the UN as world government. Countries should only trade sovereignty for increased security, he said. Banks acknowledged the point, but said the whole exercise becomes pointless without rules for intervention. Pol-Econ Couns noted that the United States has been frustrated because of the lack of UN intervention where appropriate, not because there was too much of it. Banks asked whether Secretary Annan's draft proposal for such rules would create a problem for the United States. The Charge said the draft language did not seem to rule out our acting without the UN if needed. He noted that Congress' most recent declaration under the U.S. War Powers Act, on Iraq, focused on the UN resolutions against Saddam that had not been enforced. Mosley said if one only trades sovereignty for security, the question becomes how one defines the latter. The Secretary General defines security broadly, she said. We do as well, said the Charge, especially since 9/11 had highlighted the dangers posed by failed states. But, he added, if the focus is too broad attention gets diverted from what is most important.

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Take off those Rose-colored Glasses  
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14. (C) Both Banks and Mosley admitted that New Zealanders can be somewhat unrealistic when it comes to their confidence in the United Nations and the organization's potential to bring order to the world. Maintaining this rosy view will be difficult once the UN fails to intervene where Kiwis think it should. (Comment: We already saw a hint of this when local media pointed out that it was the U.S. Navy that first reached tsunami victims late last year.)

15. (C) Banks added that despite the fact that New Zealanders take the UN very seriously, they do not yet see that their country has declining influence there. Instead, they continue to believe that the country's history as a founding

member and later an unofficial nonaligned country gives New Zealand a special status in the organization. In reality, said Banks, the country's influence will continue to fall as that of large countries and regional groupings rise. Kiwis do not want to hear that for this reason New Zealand needs to reach out more bilaterally, for example to engage individual countries in Asia in light of the changing regional architecture. Banks said that even those who do see this, such as influential academic Terence O'Brien, believe that MFAT officials are too negative in their view that New Zealand's incompletely thought-out, multilateral foreign policy focus is marginalizing the country. We (at MFAT) are trained to see the risks, Banks said. Politicians are not. Mosley added that there is still a certain missionary zeal in New Zealand, and that even some diplomats do not understand that the country did not create and cannot fix all the world's problems.

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Background: Rosemary Banks  
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16. (U) Foreign Minister Goff announced on March 1 that Banks would be New Zealand's next UN PermRep, replacing Don MacKay. Banks, a career diplomat, has in her 30 years with MFAT served at the UN in both New York and Geneva, in the Solomon Islands, and in Australia. She has also held senior Ministry posts at MFAT, including as Director of Information and Public Affairs and Director of the North Asia Division. She was seconded early in her career to the Department of Trade and Industry. As Deputy Secretary of MFAT's Programme Three, Banks has responsibility for managing the Ministry's Consular, Disarmament, Economic, Environment and Antarctic, Legal, UN and Commonwealth, and Human Rights divisions.

17. (C) Banks is hard-working and well regarded by those who work with her, including both NZ and U.S. Government officials. Her no-nonsense approach is matched by a recognition that New Zealand needs to be more engaged in the world. For example, we believe Banks was pivotal in convincing the Prime Minister that despite its opposition to the war in Iraq, New Zealand should provide military engineers to assist in post-war reconstruction. We predict she will be a constructive force in promoting UN reform.

Burnett